

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INFORMATION SYSTEM: A USERS' GUIDE

1. INTRODUCTION

WHAT THE HMIS CAN DO FOR YOU

The Hazardous Materials Information **System** -- HMIS for short -- is a computerized database of information for people working in hazardous materials management. The system provides basic technical information required at all levels to assist in the proper handling, storage, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials. In addition to providing data to these operating functions, it also provides information to the safety, health, and environmental functions. The system was initially developed for use by the Department of Defense (DoD). The availability of the system to other Federal agencies and the private sector is discussed on pages 2-1 and 2-2.

The HMIS is designed to assist individuals in their employment duties when hazardous materials are involved. The database provides useful information on over **30,000** hazardous records to a variety of people with very different job responsibilities. However, although the HMIS data are a key element **in** the proper management of hazardous materials, they must be used in conjunction with other resources such as occupational safety and health standards, criteria documents, and other technical guides. For example, a toxic substance such as a pesticide will be identified in the HMIS along with data on health effects in the event of unprotected exposure. But individuals handling and using that pesticide need to use the proper equipment and follow the proper procedures. Selection and fitting of equipment and procedures are accomplished by safety and health personnel after they examine the HMIS data and consider such additional information as ambient conditions during use, policies, procedures, handbooks, and personnel skills.



In the simplest terms, the HMIS can provide information on hazardous materials. The information must be applied in conjunction with other information as part of your decision-making process. This is an important key to proper management of hazardous materials.

Additional background on HMIS and how information gets into the system may be found in Section 6 of this Guide.

Section 2 presents general information on the HMIS publications and how you can obtain them. Section 3 explains how to use the microfiche to locate information in the system. The layout of the microfiche is discussed in Section 4. Major information categories (data elements) of special interest to people working in specific areas are identified in Section 5. Section 6 provides you with a historical perspective on the HMIS and a brief description of how data on hazardous materials get into the system.

